

The Contributions of Indigenous Knowledge and Inuit-Driven Research to Defining Community Priorities, Policymaking, and Land-Use Governance in North Slope, Alaska

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Everyone knows the Arctic is rapidly changing, and communities are facing challenges

Good intentions, but pitfalls?

Unusable
Research

Duplicate
Research

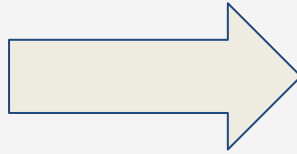
Unethical
Practices

Bias and
Preconception

Causing Research
Fatigue

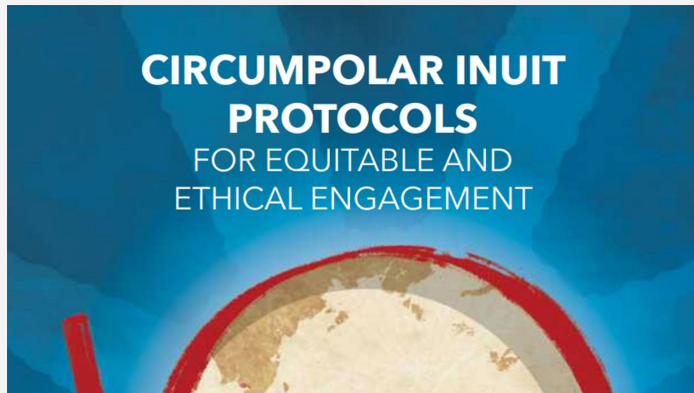
A Research Paradigm Shift

Here are my
questions, what are
your answers?



**What are you
interested in? What
do you want me to
focus on?**

A Research Paradigm Shift



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Insight

A framework for co-production of knowledge in the context of Arctic research

Negeqlikacaarni kangingnaulriani ayuqenrilnguut piyaraitgun kangingnauryararkat

Ellam Yua, *Julie Raymond-Yakoubian*¹, *Raychelle Aluaq Daniel*² and *Carolina Behe*³



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WASHINGTON, D.C.



November 30, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM:

Arati Prabhakar, Ph.D.

Assistant to the President and Director
Office of Science and Technology Policy

Brenda Mallory

Chair, Council on Environmental Quality

SUBJECT:

Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on Indigenous Knowledge



Fieldwork location:

Utqiagvik, AK
(formerly known as
Barrow)

Fieldwork time:
2022.12

Findings and Learnings: key aspects to successful governance

Equitable and ethical research **serving community needs**

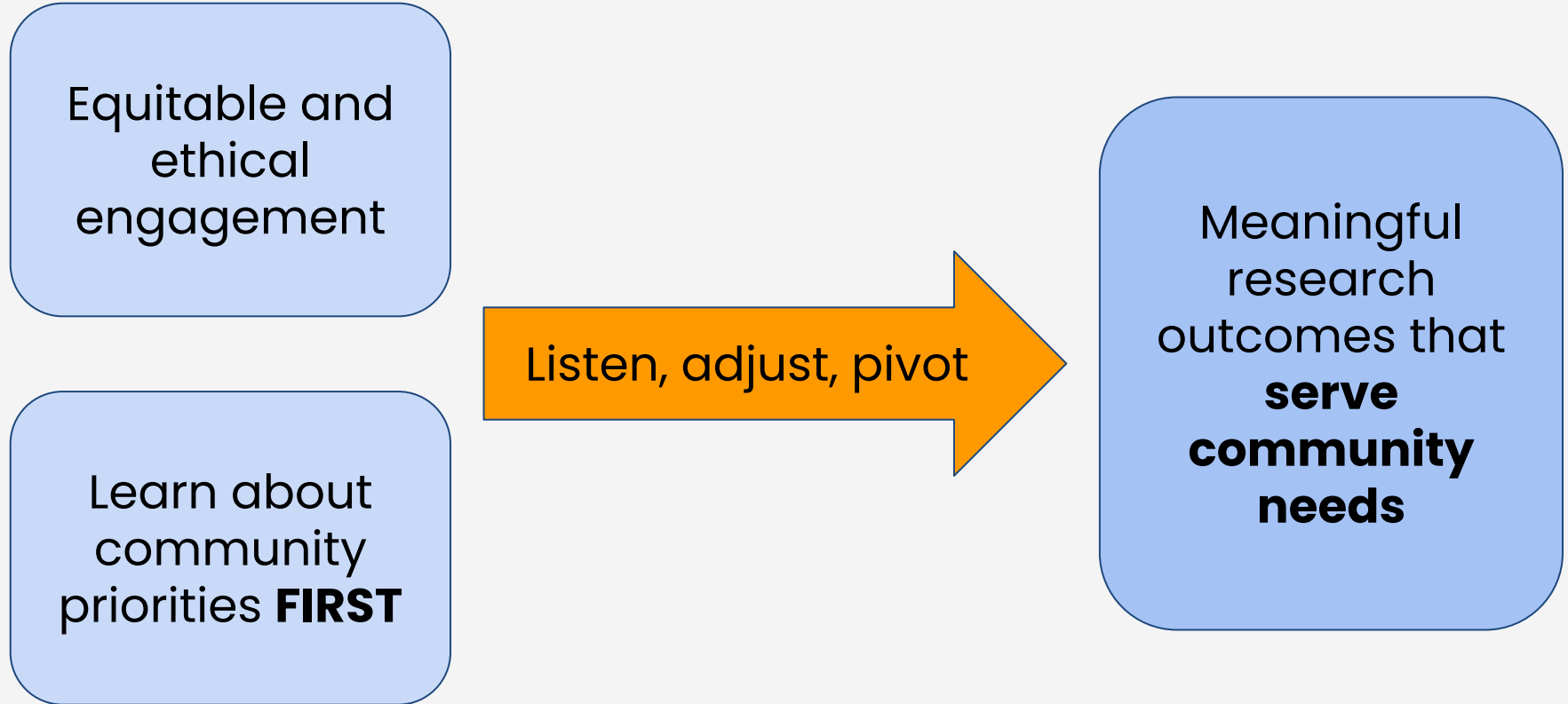
Indigenous-led **research and ecological monitoring**

Balance and Iñupiat values

Stipulations developed through **community meetings** and multilateral conversations

Utqiaġvik, AK, 2022.12

1: Equitable and ethical research serving community needs



1: Equitable and ethical research serving community needs

Community interests & Advice for researchers, coming from the Iñupiat Peoples:

Always come with an open mind.

– Iñupiat leader 04

Iñupiat are interested in knowledge-sharing:

“Also think about other places in the Arctic or other places in the world – maybe how they can help us or we can help them.”

– Iñupiat leader 03

Be open to adjust research directions:

“Be flexible with what you're working with and where your project may lead.”

– Iñupiat leader 03

1: Equitable and ethical research serving community needs

Do not duplicate research. Instead, empower capacity-building:

“... versus what a dozen researchers coming to the same conclusion ...”

– Iñupiat leader 05

“We're done studying our land ... How can we implement to to get more resources or funding for our communities?”

– Iñupiat leader 02

Support Indigenous Peoples to lead research and train outside researchers:

“At the end of the day, it's gonna be the local person on the ground that knows much more... our local hunters trained the helicopter pilot and the researchers on staff.”

– Iñupiat leader 04

1: Equitable and ethical research serving community needs

Build trust, learn, and serve community needs:

“The [non-Indigenous] staff that we have here right now, they've learned to build a mutual, trusting relationship with our people.”

– Iñupiat leader 04

“Take a year or two to learn the Iñupiat way... lean it towards what can you do that's actually helpful to the communities.”

– (Non-Indigenous) Biologist 03

Climate change related research is a priority:

“When the ice is not coming in with the animals, that means it's not bringing in food for the Iñupiat... So that's something you should look into.”

– Iñupiat leader 01

2: Balance and Iñupiat values

Iñupiat Peoples in the North Slope have seen great successes in **achieving a balance**



Utqiagvik, AK, 2022.12

2: Balance and Iñupiat values

Maintaining subsistence skills and practices:

“Even though there's a cash economy up here, there's no way we could live up here without our subsistence food.”

– Iñupiat leader 06

Iñupiat values:

“We have to protect the land and the resources, it's so deeply rooted in us.”

– Iñupiat leader 04

“Research during development is never ending.”

– Iñupiat leader 01

Continuous reporting:

“Continuous reporting between the government and the residents ... to have that harmony”

– Iñupiat leader 01

2: Balance and Iñupiat values

Living both worlds:

“Find a balance of living in the western culture and what we've known for thousands of years, traditional living.”

– Iñupiat leader 01

Industrial development and income helping subsistence:

“I think quality of life for basically everybody has improved, because of jobs and income ... fuel, snow machines, bullets, guns, arctic gear, all that stuff, it costs a lot of money”

– (Non-Indigenous) Biologist 01

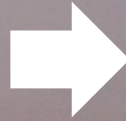
Improved relationships with industry:

“It's like a good neighbor policy ... [the oil company] actually loaded up a cargo plane and flown a plane full of whale back to Nuiqsut.”

– Biologist 01

3 : Indigenous-led research and ecological monitoring

**Inuit-centered
scientific research
and ecological
monitoring**



**Effective
policymaking and
land governance**

3 : Inuit-led research and ecological monitoring

Inuit-driven research:

“Our mission is to work FOR and work WITH the communities, and produce good scientific research that helps answer the questions our communities are asking”

– Iñupiat Leader 03, Department of Wildlife Management

Indigenous advising:

“The advisor will tell [the oil companies], whaling's coming up, caribou are migrating right now, and keep them absolutely informed”

– Iñupiat Leader 01

3 : Inuit-led research and ecological monitoring

Co-production of knowledge:

“Because we're working together with our local hunters, knowledge holders, plus very well respected scientists, that it really is the best of both worlds.”

– Iñupiat Leader 04

Ethical engagement practices:

“Local whaling captains and crews knew a lot more about whales than western scientists too ... our scientists live here and assimilate and learn from the culture that they live with.”

– (Non-Indigenous) Biologist 01

“What am I most proud of? Professionally, I guess it's been helping promote scientific collaboration with the community.”

– (Non-Indigenous) Biologist 02

4 : Stipulations developed through community meetings

**Community
meetings
&
Multilateral
conversations**

**Inuit priorities put
first &
Sustainability for
community and
ecosystems**

Stipulations
Regulations
Permits

Utqiagvik, AK, 2022.12

4 : Stipulations developed through community meetings

Defining priorities:

“Trilaterals ... with every one of our villages, to see what they feel like is needed most.”

– Iñupiat Leader 02

Developing stipulations:

“We have permits and stipulations to ensure that they're not hindering any animals specifically like caribou or fish.”

– Iñupiat Leader 02

“Each village has their own meeting ... and that's when they decide whether they can build [the project] or not.”

– Local 01

Key Takeaways

- Practice **research paradigm shift**
- Ask about **community priorities** **BEFORE** developing a project
- Empower Indigenous **self-determination** and **self-governance**
- Build capacity for **Inuit-led research** and **knowledge-sharing**
- Follow **ethical and equitable engagement protocols** and true **co-production of knowledge** in all stages of scientific research and decision-making

Acknowledgements

Land Acknowledgement:

The content and learnings included in this presentation are based on the interviews conducted with leaders, experts, scientists, and Indigenous community members in Utqiaġvik, Alaska, part of the unceded territories of the Iñupiat Peoples. I acknowledge that Iñupiat Peoples have been stewards of the land since time immemorial and have given the land incredible care. I am grateful for the profound perspectives, stories, experience, and knowledge that the Iñupiat Peoples have shared with me during my visit. The interviewees possess all rights to the perspectives they shared that are included in this presentation, and the right to revise any points presented in case any information or view is not accurate.

Utqiaġvik, AK, 2022.12

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- City of Utqiaġvik, Alaska
- Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat
- Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission
- University of Alaska Anchorage
- University of Alaska Fairbanks

among others.

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Thank You! Quyanaq!



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